



*Saint Louis Audubon*

*Bulletin*

March, 1961

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## THE ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

... Presents ...

### COMING ATTRACTION

Dr. Alfred M. Bailey, director of the Natural History Museum of Denver, Colorado, author and photographer, will present his newest film-lecture, "Subantarctic Isle", on Friday, March 17, in the main auditorium of the Third Baptist Church, 620 N. Grand Boulevard, at 8:15 p. m.

"Subantarctic Isle" is a color film of an expedition to Campbell Island, one of the most isolated meteorological stations in the world, 400 miles south of New Zealand, and an area famous for concentrations of animal, bird and marine life rarely seen by human eyes. Accompanied by three assistants and his 15-year-old grandson, Dr. Bailey and his party were transported on the destroyer USS Brough to the subantarctic Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans to observe the field work of the meteorological station there, explore and make motion pictures of the wildlife of the area. In action and color, rare shots were recorded of penguin colonies, high nesting sites, almost inaccessible to man, of various species of albatrous and the habitats of the huge elephant bull seals, sea lions and fur seals.

An explorer of wildlife on six continents, Dr. Bailey is the author of "Birds of Arctic Alaska" and "Birds of Colorado," soon to be published. He is a contributor of articles to the National Geographic and various nature magazines, and has presented his color motion pictures to audiences throughout the United States, Canada and Australia.

## BIRD WALKS

Spring is here and spring marks the season of bird walks for Audubon members. Four will be held in Forest Park as follows:

April 23rd and 30th

May 7th and 14th

For each of these walks participants are to meet at the Jefferson Memorial in Forest Park at 7:30 a. m. Leaders will be provided.

Another will be held on Saturday, May 13th, at Creve Coeur where participants are to meet at the refreshment stand at 8 a. m.

All those who are interested are cordially invited.

There will be 2 Saturday field trips for beginners at Shaw's Garden.

April 29th and May 6th

Participants are to meet at the gate at 8 a. m. The leader will be Wally George.

An Audubon picnic will be announced by postcard to all members soon.

## PERSONALS

Congratulations to G. Edward Budde of our town, veteran conservationist just appointed chairman of the Committee of National Conservation Problems for the annual convention of the Conservation Federation of Missouri in April.

Hampton L. Carson, professor of zoology at Washington University, has been selected as a Fulbright research scholar to study population genetics at the University of Melbourne, Australia. He will be on leave of absence until December.

## AUDUBON SOCIETY LECTURER-NATURALIST HEARD OVER KMOX

*By* THELMA THALINGER

We are hoping that members and friends of the St. Louis Audubon Society tuned in on KMOX Radio Station on Tuesday, January 31st, when Rex Davis, Director of the station's News Department, interviewed Emerson Scott on the highlights of "Pika Country." Again on Tuesday, February 28th, Mr. Davis interviewed our speaker William Ferguson on his experiences as cartoonist and comic strip artist, and photographer-naturalist of "This Curious World in Nature." Both interviews were lively and excellent, and we heard on good authority that attendance to the Screen Tours increased as a result of these broadcasts. As our next lecturer, Dr. Alfred M. Bailey, does not arrive in St. Louis until shortly before his appearance at O'Fallon High School, we are not certain that he will be interviewed, but we are working on it, thanks to the cooperation of Mr. Davis and his staff. We recommend that you tune in on the KMOX "At Your Service" program, (which begins at 12:15 p. m., and runs until 7:00 p. m.), on March 17th.

Mr. Davis is also planning to interview some of our local bird experts before and during the spring bird walks.

## MEMBER IN THE NEWS

The National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D. C., awarded a Foreign Field Research grant to Eugene J. Wilhelm, Jr., of University City, Missouri. Eugene (known as Gene to all of his St. Louis friends) will be accompanied by his wife, Diane, when they depart for South America in February. Gene and Diane plan to spend about 13 months in Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. The title of their research, financed by the Office of Naval Research, is: "The General Forest Ecology of the Lake Country of the Southern Andes."

The St. Louis Audubon Society is familiar with both Gene and Diane Wilhelm, for not only have they compiled "Birds of the St. Louis area" (1959) but also have donated countless hours in assisting the Society in leading bird walks, teaching, radio and TV work, and research.

Our heartiest congratulations go to Eugene and Diane on this honor they have received.

## NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, NATURE CENTERS ARE MERGING

NEW YORK CITY — The National Audubon Society and Nature Centers for Young America, Inc., national, non-profit organizations, are merging in order to intensify a campaign to insure that America's city children will have places to experience the world of nature and study conservation.

Both organizations have called meetings of their members to pass on a merger proposal previously approved and recommended by their board of directors. Society members will convene in person or by proxy, in accordance with New York corporation law, at 11 a. m. April 21 in Audubon House, 1130 Fifth Avenue, New York City. NCYA members have been asked to meet at 4 p. m. the same day, same location. The plan for consolidation was initiated late last year by the officers of NCYA.

President Carl W. Buchheister of the National Audubon Society said the staff and program of NCYA would be operated as a division and coordinated with the Society's other educational activities.

NCYA was formed in the spring of 1959 under the leadership of Erard A. Matthiessen, conservationist and civic leader of New York and Stamford, Conn., and John Ripley Forbes, one of the founders of the original Stamford museum, predecessor of the present Stamford Museum and Nature Center.

"It was organized," according to Matthiessen, president of NCYA, "to aid American communities in setting aside areas of natural land, establishing living museums, exhibits and natural science workshops, and developing dynamic outdoor educational programs for the youth of America, their families, and the generations to come."

During the past two years NCYA participated in the establishment of seven natural centers of junior museums. These are the Mid-Fairfield County Youth Museum at Westport, Conn.; Lake Erie Junior Museum, Bay Village, Ohio; Junior Museum of Palm Beach County, West Palm Beach, Fla.; New Canaan Nature Center, New Canaan, Conn.; Tenaflly Center, Tenaflly, N. J.; Macon Youth Museum, Macon, Ga.; and the Big Cypress Center, Naples, Fla.

Promotional assistance and technical guidance also have been provided to local groups interested in starting nature centers at Albany,

Scarsdale, Roslyn, Syosset, and Westchester County, New York; Milwaukee, Wisc.; Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn.; New London, Conn., Tallahassee, Fla.; Kalamazoo, Mich.; and Springfield, Mass.

The National Audubon Society has been operating model educational centers for children at Greenwich, Conn., Dayton, Ohio, and at El Monte, near Los Angeles. Cooperating with school authorities, these centers provide nature instruction in the out-of-doors to thousands of children annually.

"The Nature Centers program will serve as another major educational extension arm of the Society," Mr. Buchheister said. "The Audubon Junior Program, with the cooperation of schools and organized youth groups, already has initiated more than ten million children to nature study since 1910."

"Publications of the Society will be used along with NCYA literature to promote the Nature Center movement, and we believe the several State Audubon Societies and the 315 local branches and affiliates of the National Society can help in many ways to bring about the establishment of Nature Centers in cities where the need is recognized. Some of them have already been cooperating with NCYA."

The National Audubon Society, probably the nation's best known conservation organization, was incorporated in 1905. While stressing conservation education, it also maintains a chain of sanctuaries for the protection of rare or endangered species of wildlife, conducts biological research, and operates Audubon Camps for the training of teachers and other adults in ecology and techniques of conservation education. It publishes AUDUBON MAGAZINE and speaks as a citizen's organization on public conservation issues.

Mr. Matthiessen and some of the other trustees of NCYA will continue to serve as a special advisory committee to the program. It is part of the plan that some will become members of the Audubon board.

## SOME THOUGHTS ON SONGBIRDS

By JAMES J. JACKSON

Until the Federal Migratory Bird Law of 1913, the idea of legal protection for non-game birds had to be sold to the public by many persuasive means. Until that time robins were still a table delicacy in some southern states and many songbirds were still being shot "Just for the sport of it". Among the first arguments for songbird protection was the one that without them, insects would explode in numbers and literally rule the earth. Another argument was that many songbirds, notably sparrows and other finches, are necessary for controlling the spread of noxious weed seeds. These statements are still floating around; nevertheless, they are not as realistic as they seemed fifty years ago.

It is true that virtually all insectivorous birds are, at some time or other, active in controlling insects harmful to human interests. Yet I know an entomologist who claims that for every harmful species of insect there is another predatory insect, or a spider which works in our favor. He also points out that the songbirds do not discriminate between insects which are pests and those which are predators of pests. No doubt a meadowlark would just as soon eat a praying mantis as a grasshopper. My friend does not deny that some insects do get out of bounds numerically, but he claims that they would do this with or without songbirds anyway. And according to him, if birds can't control an out-

break of harmful insects, predatory insects will do the job — eventually. Could be.

Now let's consider the finch-like birds as controllers of weeds. By weeds we generally mean plants growing where they are not wanted; nothing more, nothing less. But regardless of definition, birds do not control or limit the spread of weed seeds. One reason for this is that no flock of sparrows is so thorough in its searchings as to glean every seed of ragweed, dandelion, or what-have-you from any particular field. Even after a severe blizzard, when they attack elevated seed heads, sparrows do miss many fine seeds that scatter and settle into the snow.

Most of the seed-eating birds actually contribute to the success of many weed types. Among those plants which have fleshy fruits, the actual seed often has such a hard coating that it cannot imbibe water, it cannot germinate unless the coating has been scratched or the seed has been in the soil for several years. When a bird eats such a fruit, the seed passes through its digestive system where it is acted upon by the digestive acids. This serves to scratch the hard coating, thus preparing the seed for germination. When the seed is dropped it is even supplied with fertilizer. This, of course, is why such plants as pokeweed and poison ivy thrive so commonly beneath wire fences.

My purpose of explaining these things is not to degrade our songbirds. Far from it. It is to suggest two thoughts regarding songbirds and possibly some other wild, living things.

The first thought is that we should never have to defend songbirds on economic grounds. Maybe that was necessary fifty years ago but who would think now of sitting down to a meal of roasted robin? Or who would think of shooting songbirds other than a thoughtless, uneducated boy with a gun? Certainly we can enjoy seeing and hearing our bird friends without placing a price on their heads.

The second thought is that, human as it might be, placing birds and other wild creatures in the categories of either good or bad can often be a mistake. From a gardener's viewpoint — if you wish to stretch it — the wren that catches insects is a much better neighbor than the sparrow that drops poison ivy seeds along his fence. But from nature's viewpoint it would not matter. Nor would it to the gardener who doesn't know about the dietary habits of his bird neighbors. The point is, the relationships and values of wild creatures, like the many facets of modern society, are too complex to be viewed as black or white, good or bad.

## A HOUSEWIFE'S DIARY ON A EUROPEAN TREE SPARROW FOR 15 MONTHS

By EVA C. KIRKPATRICK  
(Continued from Last Issue)

July 1, '56—Record of the nests in our yard;  
Robin—pear tree  
Wren—bluebird house in ash tree. (2 broods)  
E.T.S.—bluebird house in another ash tree. (3 broods)  
Brown Thrasher—thicket in a grape vine tangle.  
Bluebird—hole in an old wild cherry tree.  
Starling—hole in another wild cherry tree.  
Flicker—in a persimmon stump.

(Continued on Page 6)

Downy—in a dead persimmon tree in the thicket.

Chickadee—in a dead torn elm tree up in the sassafras grove.

Towhee—on the ground in a very bushy, grassy area close to the sassafras trees. Found it by accident.

Cardinal—gooseberry bush in the thicket.

Crow—in huge ash tree north of towhee's nest. Found theirs and the jays when the leaves fell. Didn't know they were so close to the house.)

Titmouse—dead elm tree hole, 30 ft. back in wood

Jay—oak tree bordering on the thicket.

July 8, '56—E.T.S. are setting.

July 9, '56—13 E.T.S. at ground feeder at one time.

July 10, '56—22 E.T.S. at feeder.

July 22, '56—So busy nursing the sick cuckoo and rearing the baby indigo bunting that didn't notice if E.T.S. have pushed out babies. See no activity.

July 31, '56—Now raising a robin. Wants to eat only vitamins.

August 20, '56—Wren moved in the E.T.S. house. E.T.S. appeared out of the blue and drove it away. Otherwise they do not appear around house. (When we cleaned out the house the next week, found little sticks where the wren had started a nest.)

August 28, '56—Baby E.T.S. playing in the pear trees.

October 5, '56—Spotted E.T.S. building nest? in the same house! Is it possible?

October 6, '56—Still building! 4th brood if it is.

October 7, '56—Couldn't stand the suspense. Had to go out and peek. Lots of feathers including some of a cuckoo and jay low at the bottom. Not at all like their spring nest. Called Connie. She said very likely it was a winter nest. Of course, why didn't I think of that?

October 16, '56—Bluebird in the E.T.S. house in their nest. Starling tried to get in too. Didn't see E.T.S.

November 2, '56—Battle royal between E.T.S. and Englishmen for the house.

November 3, '56—First day of heavy winter. E.T.S. feeding at the feeder. SORROW: Englishmen seem to be in the house.

November 3 to 11—Recorded one feeding daily.

December 8, '56—Haven't seen E.T.S. for awhile. Aren't they feeding?

ACCIDENT: E.T.S. flew into the dining room window. Heard the crash and immediately ran to see. Sparrow was on the ground in the snow on its back. RAN to get it. Must have been 5 minutes from time of crash until I picked it up. Knocked completely out. To avoid pneumonia treated with Erthromycin, 1 drop. Put in warm Easter grass. Recovered consciousness. Fed every hour with Pablum, egg yolk, and vitamin drops. Regular doses of medicine. 10 hours later seemed to be quite chipper. Pictures taken December 9th. Bird flew out of Kemp's hand and seemed to find the most impossible hole to find — where the two kitchen cabinets come together in the kitchen. We ended up by taking the woodwork apart to rescue the bird! Oh, Happy Day! Clara took pictures December 10th. Released bird one hour later.

NOTE: Brown eyes as chocolate as its head; hardy eater; enjoys milk; can be tamed; weighs about 2 ozs.

December 15, '56—12 E.T.S. hanging like Christmas tree ornaments from a tall stalk of wild lettuce.



December 20, '56—In sight at one time; 11 quail; 2 cardinals; C. wren; numerable snow birds; red belly; 3 downies; and 6 E.T.S.

January 1, '57—HALF-HOUR OBSERVATION FOR CENSUS: 1 E.T.S. in lot.

January 6, '57—2 E.T.S. in cedar.

January 13, '57—3 above. B-r-r-r! 8 E.T.S. at suet.

January 22, '57—2 E.T.S.

January 23, '57—One E.T.S. feeding in persimmon feeder during sleet storm.

January 24, '57—Kemps reports the presence of Greedy Gustine. 5 E.T.S. in St. Francis feeder chasing out English.

January 25, '57—Harrises reported feeding some E.T.S. at their house. (Neighbors up the hill.)

January 26, '57—10 E.T.S. feeding.

January 28, '57—Freezing rain and ice. 6 E.T.S.

January 30, '57—5 E.T.S.

January 31, '57—3 E.T.S. feeding at St. Francis feeder. Past 2 months have been placing food up the hill at Scotch pine. Lot of activity goes on up there. Today grabbed the new binoculars and spotted a good number of E.T.S. How long has this been going on? Other reports have been outside of kitchen window.

February 12, '57—Spotted a crippled E.T.S. No leg. He uses his wing and tail to pivot on the ground. Glad he found us. It was almost a year to the day that we had the crippled junco. Strange. But the little E.T.S. really flies. Braces himself on a tree limb by sitting in the crotch.

February 15, '57—BIG DAY—Ornithology meeting at our house. Discussion E.T.S. Large crowd of ornithologists, biologists, botanists, teachers, and just plain people like ourselves who are interested in E.T.S. Had trapped a live specimen for reports. Got loose. Now we watch "Tailless" in the feeder in the mornings. Mr. Conyers, president of Webster Groves Nature Society, wants us to help compile a new book on the EUROPEAN TREE SPARROW.

## THE END

### YEAR AND 3 MONTHS IN THE LIFE OF EUROPEAN TREE SPARROW

*Only notes of this kind taken of life of European tree sparrow.*

#### *List of Supporting Cast*

Kemps .....	R. Kemps Kirkpatrick
Earl .....	Earl Hath
Connie .....	Mrs. Earl Hath
Clara .....	Mrs. Grant Kierstead

# ST. LOUIS AUDUBON BULLETIN

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Earl H. Hath.....President

Miss Alberta Bolinger.....Executive Secretary

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